WANDERAKTE
002 — WA/GUAM-002/WV · N₂O

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A Journal of Administrative Gothic
& Bricolage World-Building

Formerly Fowl Feathered Review;formerly Doctor Zhai's Almanac, Being a Curious Vessel Containing Anything and Everything,formerly VERSUCHSANORDNUNG I, a multimedia project launched in 1979.Its first operation took place on a Honeywell VIP7200 dumb terminal, its amber text hardwired to a Honeywell Level 6 minicomputer—roughly the size of Grandma’s deep freeze—running the state’s Welfare Information Network from a walk-in closet. The publisher was eight years old, seated on his father’s lap in a cubicle . With his father’s quiet assistance, he'd copy Portsmouth Herald black-and-white alligator photographs from 72 dpi into eleven-by-fourteen-inch sheets of blistering punk art brut. This was thanks to the legendary Xerox 914,

which shipped with a fire extinguisher, just in case. The posters were intended for unauthorized distribution around town. The operation did not go entirely unnoticed. The publisher escaped to Canada and later returned as an old lobsterman. His father has spent the past thirty-four years in hiding in a cabin in the Vermont woods. This is a true story.

AEROSTATIC DOSSIER // △−77.31(b) / KNOCK
INDEX ∴ 4:13:4∞ // MERIDIAN UNCERTAIN, GUAM-INDEXED
Drifted as Utility Residue, Declared Sufficient
About the Asked (Collected Under Practice Conditions)
Published at irregular intervals, from wherever Larry has last come to rest.

Larry is a 1961 GM 4106, formerly of the intercity coach lines, now serving as the magazine's permanent — if unregistered — editorial offices. Navigation is handled by a compass that has not agreed with magnetic north since some

point in the previous administration, cross-referenced against a National Geographic map whose only printed territory is Guam. Destinations are therefore theoretical. Arrival is therefore a matter of interpretation, and minutes are kept accordingly.

Published by The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition, successor-in-interest to Fowlpox Press. (Not to be confused with the Spring-Wound Mammoth Waffle Coalition, its sister company — now defunct, dissolved under circumstances the Coalition prefers to file rather than discuss.)

The Staff (Sink-Custodians / Function-Bearers)
Virgil Kay: Final Arbiter // Driver of Record. Currently engaged in the classification of falling bakery items under aerodynamic variance. Maintains decision authority, though criteria — and route — are mobile.

Silent Bill: Overseer of Tactical Non-Sequiturs // Navigator, Nominal. Consults the compass and the Guam map with equal confidence. Executes Satzabbruchhandlung (sentence-break action) by leaving mid-utterance. This is considered a valid editorial intervention, and is also how he gives directions.

Unkie Bob: Assigned to Casual Entropy // Conductor, Unlicensed. No longer dismantles structures directly; instead applies insufficient fastening (Lockerbefestigung), now including the luggage racks, allowing failure to emerge without announcement.

The Unnamed Dishwasher: Not recorded in official listings. Present regardless, even aboard a vehicle with no dishwashing facilities. Performs continuous surface-restoration under high focus. Functions as Kerntriebwerk (core engine). Prolonged observation is

discouraged, particularly at highway speed.

“Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.”
— Virgil

OBJECTIVES

A note on lineage. WANDERAKTE began in 1984 as Doctor Zhai's Almanac, Being a Curious Vessel Containing Anything and Everything — a title whose exact original scope has become difficult to reconstruct with confidence; back issues are rumored more often than they are produced. The Almanac was succeeded by Fowl Feathered Review, which carried the mission for hundreds of issues under the Fowlpox Press imprint. WANDERAKTE is the current vessel. The name changes; the vessel, in one form or another, does not stop moving.

WANDERAKTE is devoted to Administrative Gothic and

Bricolage World-Building, as it was under both of its previous titles.

We publish fiction, poetry, essays, visual art, invented scholarship, municipal folklore, impossible ethnographies, neighborhood cosmologies, documentary fantasies, archival recoveries, procedural myths, and literary artifacts assembled from the overlooked machinery of ordinary life.

Our interest lies less in inventing new worlds than in discovering the hidden architecture already embedded within this one. We believe a city is composed not only of streets and buildings, but of maintenance corridors, filing cabinets, historical societies, obsolete technologies, misplaced inventories, volunteer committees, rumor, weather, memory, and paperwork that has quietly outlived its original purpose.

A note on jurisdiction. The magazine's roots remain in Bangor, Maine, and always will — but its current operating radius is best described as wherever the bus is idling. This is a Route rather than an Address: a page held open at the point of breakdown, resumed at the next rest stop, subject to revision by whatever the compass and the Guam map jointly agree on, which is rarely much, and never for long.

We are drawn to stories that emerge from local history, civic infrastructure, institutional language, vernacular knowledge, found objects, forgotten manuals, field guides, maps — particularly maps that have failed at their one job — radio broadcasts, View-Masters, storefronts, zoning disputes, maintenance logs, discarded catalogs, public notices, and neighborhood traditions. The marvelous should arrive through documentation rather than proclamation.

The fantastic need not descend from another universe. It may already be waiting in a basement archive, a public library vertical file, a county ledger, an abandoned utility tunnel, Larry's glovebox, or the handwritten annotations in a manual nobody has checked out since 1978.

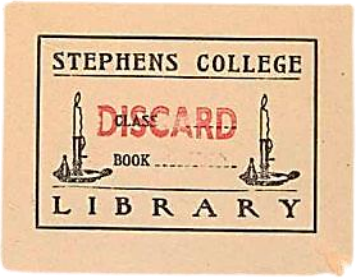
We admire careful observation, literary playfulness, serious nonsense, comic precision, scholarly invention, and worlds assembled through accumulation rather than exposition. We encourage work that treats bureaucracy as folklore, infrastructure as mythology, and ordinary places as inexhaustible sources of wonder.

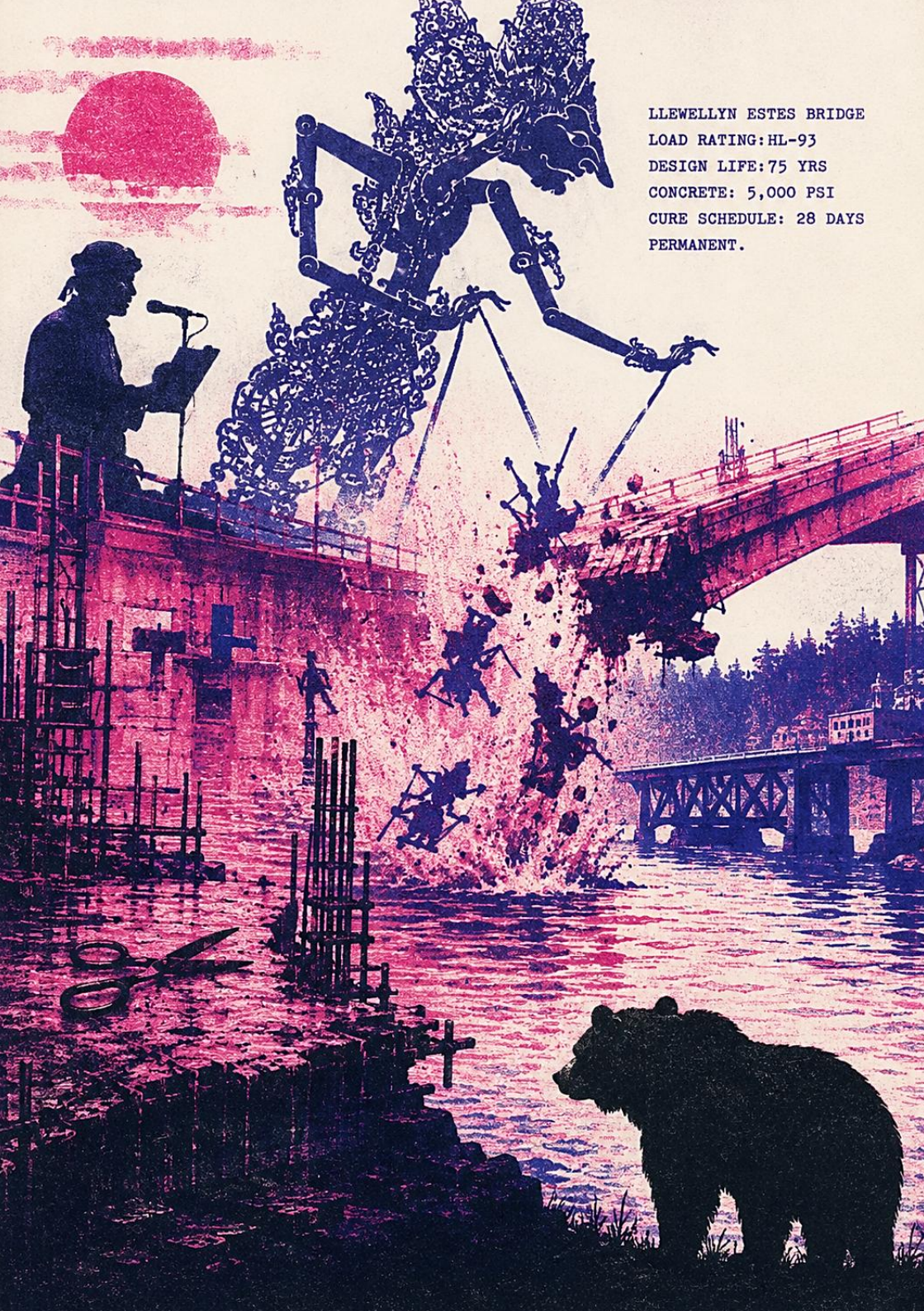
Our guiding assumption is simple:

The archive is a neighborhood.

The neighborhood is a forest.

The forest, on the map we're currently using, is Guam.




LLEWELLYN ESTES BRIDGE
LOAD RATING:HL-93
DESIGN LIFE:75 YRS
CONCRETE: 5,000 PSI
CURE SCHEDULE: 28 DAYS
PERMANENT.

Subpar Bear

A Tree Streets piece,
staged as wayang kulit

By Calico Jim

Before the play, the gunungan—world-tree, mountain, leaf-shaped boundary—is planted dead center of the linen. Its veins resemble a river-drainage map: tributaries, culverts, marsh, the small insistence of water looking for a way through.

It does not move.

Nothing may happen until it moves.

Somewhere behind the damp screen is the dalang. He does not have one voice. He has never had one voice. Tonight he will need at least four: a bear's low gravel; a river's silt-choked murmur; a courtroom's dry, Latinate rattle; and a woman's voice, dead for centuries, with sharp and unresolved opinions about

what happens when a state peels a name from the bones.

The lamp comes up.

The gunungan tips, trembles, and lifts away.

From somewhere offstage, an old lounge record warms itself into being: brass first, then electric piano, then the soft competent insistence of a studio rhythm section. It is a smooth thing trying to be industrial. It finds its pitch as a bloodhound finds a wet boot in a swamp—three false starts, a hiss of steam, and then the real one.

The gamelan does not stop for it.

It has never stopped for anyone.

Enter, stage right—the kamite, the shadow-side, where the light is old and smells of tallow—a bear.

Not a grand bear of the high woods. Not the healer, the guardian, the ancestor, the animal who rises upright and vanishes underground to return with medicine.

A middling bear. A subpar bear. An also-ran cut from stiff hide by a hand plainly rushing for the last tram. His left shoulder is jointed with a zinc rivet set slightly wrong, so that he lists three degrees to port when he walks.

This is Subpar Bear.

He has always been Subpar Bear.

He has the receipts.

Behind his shadow, barely visible beneath the lamp, a cheap plastic game box flickers—mallards in infrared, their low-resolution ghosts thrown against the sacred linen. A small red counter clicks with a dry mechanical clack and settles on a single blood-colored digit:

Our clock.

It keeps its own tempo.
The dalang holds the toy aloft like a grotesque neon puppet, then lets it fall into the sawdust.

Even the toys are subpar tonight.

Subpar Bear crosses toward the bare patch of screen: that portion of history not yet claimed by a deed, a database, a caption, a form. Then, without announcement, a Wabanaki witness enters from the wing.

No drumroll.

No courtesy of an entrance cue.

Which is the point.

"Your name's subpar."

The dalang does not soften the line into one of his four voices. He lets it fall flat and undecorated in something closer

to his own throat: a dry New England rasp.

It is the only line, all night, that does not receive a puppet.

Subpar Bear stops.

The list in his shoulder worsens before it settles.

"I know," he says. His voice is a gravelly, self-deprecating sigh. "It's on the forms."

The dalang reaches down.

He does not remove the bear.

He removes the name.

For one second, Bear is only a silhouette with an empty shoulder.

Then the paper returns.

A new name has been pinned there.

The audience cannot read it.

The dalang can.
The bear cannot.

The forms will not sit still.

Held to the lamp, they arrive already doubled. A directory offers one name, then another; one town, then another; an age that seems to belong to a different person; an old claim that points toward a legal dispute whose underlying record has not yet been found. A summary engine supplies the confidence it has mistaken for evidence. A background-search page treats adjacent addresses as kinship. A social-media caption places a familiar face beneath the wrong name.

The courtroom voice clears its throat—a sound like dry leaves scraping over concrete.

The dalang tells it to wait.

No docket has been opened.

No newspaper account has been read through.
No tribal roll has been consulted.

What lies on the linen is not proof. It is residue.

The river voice rises anyway, wet with the smell of the Merrimack.

This one is a lead, it says. A real lead. But only a lead.

The dalang places a second hide over the first.

For a moment, Bear has two shadows.

The second is a photograph: a man identified one way by a careless post and another way by the community record it has borrowed from. Behind the correction stands a family belonging to a Pequot circle of relation and memory; behind that, an old regional institution, Native-led, with

powwow grounds and decades of community life.

The image does not prove the story the first caption wanted to tell.

It does something smaller and more useful.

It corrects the name.

The dalang's hand trembles as he slides the new hide behind the old one.

There is a place north of the coast, on grounds where people gathered for powwows through the seventies and eighties. It has been remembered by people who were children there. A name might have been bestowed in such a place with community weight—not as a search-result flourish, not as a caption laid over a stranger's face, but in the presence of witnesses.

The possibility has shape.
It is not yet history.

The Wabanaki witness looks at the two hides.

"Who said it?"

No one answers.

The bear touches the paper on his shoulder.

"What does it say?"

No one answers that either.

What the directories will say, without blushing, is geography.

A Maine town.

Another Maine town.

A Connecticut city.

Then, farther west, the names of places that might mark a person's passage—or the passage of several people through a machine built to make households out of proximity.
The packet will not print phone numbers.

It will not reproduce addresses.

The people inside those records are not exhibits.

They are, however, stubbornly particular.

The machine does not understand the difference.

It finds a woman with a common name in another country, a profile belonging to a life of work and study that has nothing to do with this play. It finds a nearly empty account, a holiday greeting, a school form. It finds other citizens on an adjacent street grid and calls them possible associates.

None of them has entered.

The search engine has nevertheless put them backstage.

The dalang freezes.

There are now too many puppets.

The river wants all of them.

The courtroom wants them numbered.

The dead woman wants them buried.

The bear wants his shoulder back.

The dalang lowers the lamp.

The screen goes dark.

Gara-Gara: The Pour
An interlude for Subpar Bear — Old Town, Maine, August 13, 2026

The gunungan does not return to the linen this time.

It is carried, instead, onto a bridge deck.
Not a screen. A deck. Wet concrete curing under afternoon light, rebar showing through where the pour hasn't reached.

The dalang has never staged from wet formwork before.

He stands on it anyway.

This is gara-gara—the interlude where the order of the world comes apart before anyone is allowed to put it back together. It is not scheduled. It happens today, at approximately two in the afternoon, because that is when the pour happened.

Behind him, the courtroom voice reads from a document that calls this bridge permanent, gives it a name for the plaque—Llewellyn Estes—the kind of name a form expects. The kind of name meant to sit still.

The bridge does not sit still.

Somewhere upriver a pump keeps pushing. Nobody has told the pump the deck is already in trouble.

A fracture. Hairline. Silent.

Then not silent.

The dalang lets the collapse happen frame by frame, hide by hide, the way wayang kulit collapses always happen—not all at once, no matter how fast the thing itself goes down.

Three shadows are thrown from the falling puppets.

The dalang will not cut them from hide. He will not give them names, ages, injuries, a caption for a careless post to misplace later. He sets the shears down on the wet concrete and leaves them there.

Not everyone on this stage tonight is a puppet.

The river voice does not rise wet with borrowed grief from somewhere else, for once. It rises wet with the actual river—the Stillwater, a name that has always been a small lie, since nothing about a channel braided this close to an island this old has ever really been still. It

has only ever looked that way from the bank.

The courtroom voice keeps reading specifications after the deck is already in the water. Load ratings. Design life. Cure schedules measured in days that no longer apply to concrete now dissolving into current.

The dalang lowers the document. It was never wrong, exactly. It was only certain, on paper, about a thing paper cannot actually hold still.

Down the bank, unglamorous, still standing: the old bridge. The temporary one. The one built fast, meant to be replaced, never expected to be the version that lasts.

Nobody wrote it a plaque.

Nobody called it permanent.

It is, tonight, the only thing on the linen still carrying weight.

Somewhere in the first watch, a bear with a shoulder listing three degrees to port would recognize this without being told.

What gets filed as subpar is sometimes only the thing that was never asked to be certain—and so never had to fail at it.

The gunungan is lifted back off the deck before anyone can decide whether to applaud.

It does not answer whether Llewellyn Estes rises again with a different pour, under the same name.

It only has to move again.

Gara-gara does not conclude the play. It only clears the stage for what the play was already becoming.

Here the gunungan comes down again—not the end, only the first turning.

Behind it, unseen, the dalang shuffles his hides.

A probate seal.

A copied silsilah, three names deep and growing less legible with each generation.

A child whose age changes between pages.

A Siwanoy man taking a dead woman's name the way one takes a coat left on a chair: out of respect, or out of hunger.

The puppets cannot say which.

Neither can the dalang.
The courtroom voice, impatient in the dark, begins assembling a new exhibit: states attempting to hold the living still by regulating names; systems designed without room for mononyms, accents, continuities that predate the form. The rules come in strips of hide—character limits, approved lists, forced surnames, fields that refuse to

accept a person without splitting them into first and last.

Each rule is another label.

The dalang hangs them on Bear.

By the fourth, the bear is nearly covered.

Only one paw remains visible.

The dead woman laughs without mirth.

First they make a column, she says. Then they demand that you fit it.
The river, less eager now, murmurs of peoples who have treated the dead otherwise: those who bury quickly, those who wait; those who return to wash and dress their ancestors; those who understand a body as relation before it becomes record. Its voice does not claim their rites for this story. It names them only to refuse the state's small fantasy that a

person may be reduced cleanly to biological matter or alphabetical data.

The dalang holds up a diagram he has drawn on a scrap of paper.

STATE CIVIL CONTROL
|
Living Identity: names, spellings, lineage, consent
Dead Biology: remains, custody, classification

The dalang looks at the diagram.

The diagram looks back.

The courtroom voice wants order. The bear's voice wants only a name that will hold still.

The dalang reaches for the scissors.

He stops.

A name is already written on Bear.

He did not write it.

Somewhere in the pile is a piece of paper that will eventually say:

LAUGHING BEAR

It has not yet been cut from the hide.

No one behind the screen has decided who gets to hold the shears.

The bear sees the letters.

He backs away.
The Wabanaki witness steps forward.
The courtroom voice says:

"Identity requires documentation."

The river says:

"Identity requires continuity."

The dead woman says:

"Identity requires witnesses."

The dalang says nothing.

Subpar Bear points at the paper.

"Who put that there?"

The red counter clicks.

Then:

The clock has advanced without permission.

The dalang raises the stack anyway. Towns, captions, amended names, a community ground, a photo corrected too late, a copied genealogy, a rumor of litigation, an account that belongs to someone else entirely. Names chosen. Inherited. Misread. Assigned by websites. Spoken in public by people who had the standing to witness them.

All of it visible enough to compile at 10:15 p.m.

Still being compiled after midnight.

And not yet—on this linen—proven to be one another.

The distinction is almost invisible.

It is also the entire play.

Subpar Bear waits in the dark of the first turning, listed at the shoulder, receipts in whatever counts as a hand.
He is still only the middling figure the hand cut in a hurry.

Yet the older stories press against the linen: the healer who digs roots; the relative who stands upright; the sleeper who returns with medicine; the guardian; the ancestor.

None of that power has been pinned to his shoulder.

The forms do not recognize it.

The dalang reaches for the gunungan.

Before he can lift it, the bear speaks again.

Not in the bear's voice.

Not in the courtroom voice.

Not in the river voice.

Not in the voice of the woman who died centuries ago.

In the dalang's own voice:
"It's on the forms."

The gunungan rises.

The stage is empty.
The bear is gone.

Only his receipt remains.

The question that begins the play is the question the packet leaves open:

When a name keeps blooming across records, coasts, decades, and screens, what is being described?

A life?

A lineage?

A community ground where a name was once spoken before witnesses?

Or the habit of the internet and the state to file strangers—and their bodies—in the same drawer?

The gunungan does not answer.

It never has.

It only has to move again.

Pathet Nem — the first watch: youth and formation.

Electric Sheep

By *Pete Wurst*

At approximately ten o'clock in
the morning
the machinery had its opinion.

This is how it happens.

A man is working at a paper mill
in Skowhegan, Maine,
where trees have been converted
into paper
and paper into money
and money, presumably, into the
invisible
metaphysical lubrication of
civilization,

when the machine says

NO.

Not no in the philosophical
sense,
not the Kantian noumenal NO,
not the little bureaucratic NO
stamped upon a requisition form
by a woman who has gone to
lunch,

but NO—

in volts,

in amperes,

in the terrible blue grammar
of electricity.

And the man—

the poor, poor man—

was reportedly unconscious.

Not poetically unconscious.

Not unconscious as Rimbaud was
unconscious
or as a Czech surrealist might
become unconscious
after three beers, a railway
timetable,
and a disagreement with the
moon.

No.

Unconscious in the practical
Maine sense:
not breathing.

First responders came.

The machinery remained.

The paper mill remained.

Skowhegan remained where
Skowhegan has always remained,
between the river and the road,
under the enormous indifferent
mathematics of weather.

THINK of it!!

Electrocuted like a sheep jolted
by an electric fence—

but worse!

Much worse!

Because the sheep at least has
the dignity
of knowing it has encountered an
electric fence.

The sheep approaches.

The sheep investigates.
The sheep touches.

The sheep receives the ancient
theological correction:

DO NOT TOUCH THAT.

But a man goes to work.

He has a job.

He has machinery.

He has things to fix, things to
operate, things to inspect,
things whose names have been
abbreviated
by generations of industrial
necessity.

He is not looking for
transcendence.

He is looking for Thursday
morning.

And suddenly Thursday morning
is Saint Elmo's Fire
and Jacob's Ladder
and the burning bush
and the municipal substation
all at once.
Have a pickle.

Here.

Take it.

They're tasty.

ROASTED!

Well, perhaps not roasted.

Pickled.

The distinction is important.

Civilization depends upon
distinctions.

A pickle is a cucumber
which has passed through history
and come out the other side
with vinegar in its veins.

The poor, poor man.

I hope his nose is alright.
Y'know, I read once that in
Russia—

—and here we must stop.

Because Russia is always
waiting.

Russia waits behind every
pickle.

Russia waits behind every nose.

Russia waits behind every
attempt
to regulate the human appetite
for smoke, machinery, vodka,
electricity,
God, pleasure, disorder,
or simply doing what one was
already doing.

There was a time,
under the early Romanovs,
when tobacco was not merely
frowned upon.

It was forbidden.

The smoke itself became
contraband.
The nose became a jurisdiction.

The mouth became a border
crossing.

The Tsar, the Church, the police,
and the architecture of a wooden city
all looked at the cigarette
and saw catastrophe.

Fire.

Sin.

Foreignness.

Bad air.

A little brown cylinder
containing the entire problem of modernity.

THINK of it!!

A man in Skowhegan
struck by electricity
in a paper mill

and a Russian peasant
three centuries earlier
putting tobacco to his lips

and somewhere between them

the state

the church

the machine

the body

the nose

the lung

the spark

the pickle

the sheep

and the Tsar

all enter into the same sentence.

This is not comparison.

Comparison is too orderly.
This is accumulation.

This is the heap.

This is the Czech warehouse of
the mind
where a broken icon rests beside
a voltage meter,
where a pickle jar sits upon a
Marxist pamphlet,
where a dead sheep has been
painted
the color of an electrical
warning sign,
where Máj arrives without being
invited
and asks why the moon is always
treated
as though it were innocent.

It isn't.

Nothing is innocent around
machinery.

The machine remembers.

The machine has no mercy
because mercy requires
hesitation
and the machine was designed
precisely to eliminate
hesitation.

ON.

OFF.

ON.

OFF.

The human body, however,
has no OFF switch.

This is the fundamental
embarrassment.

The heart continues its little
municipal project.

The lungs insist upon oxygen.

The nerves send telegrams
to destinations nobody has
mapped.

And then—
current.

A flash.

A body falls.

The morning changes shape.

Somewhere a truck keeps moving.

Somewhere a kettle boils.

Somewhere a man eats lunch
and complains that the pickles
are too sour.

And in Skowhegan
first responders kneel beside a
worker
who has encountered, without
permission,
the invisible architecture of
the universe.

Electricity.

The oldest ghost in the
building.

The thing Benjamin Franklin
pulled from the sky.
The thing the mills
domesticated.

The thing civilization pretended
it had put into wires.

It hadn't.

It merely gave the ghost
a uniform.

So let us leave the man
where the news leaves him:

hospitalized,

alive enough to be taken there,

his fate unfinished.

Let us not turn injury
into ornament.

Let the machine remain monstrous
without making the man into
mythology.

And let us, briefly,
put down the newspaper.

Look at the pickle.
Look at its ridiculous green
body.

Look at the vinegar.

Look at the jar.

Look at the sheep.

Look at the nose.

Look at Russia waiting at the
edge of the paragraph.

Look at the paper.

Look at the tree that became the
paper
that became the news
that became this poem.

THINK of it!!

A tree.

A machine.

A man.

A spark.

A hospital.

A pickle.

A nose.

And the entire ridiculous world
still humming.

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IT-6
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THE ABSENT ORIGINAL

A Maine Forensic Feuilleton in Four Mamas, Three Birds, and One Size

By Mad King Ludwig's Left Ventricle

INTAKE YARD // DOCUMENT [UNRESOLVED]

CASE STATUS: UNRESOLVED

There was a body.

This is the first fact.

Not a murder.

Not a birth.

Not a miracle.

A body.

A woman was found on a trail in Maine, where the town had thinned into spruce and wet

stone but had not yet become wilderness. The trail was not public enough to be called a road and not remote enough to be called wilderness. This caused the first disagreement.

The second disagreement concerned the weather.

The third concerned whether the woman had been alone.

The fourth did not enter the official report.

The woman appeared to have died without struggle. Her position suggested collapse. Her hands contained no defensive injury. There was no broken vegetation sufficient to establish a confrontation.

The heart was proposed.

The heart was not proved.

There was, however, evidence consistent with recent delivery.

RECENT DELIVERY

The phrase was underlined twice in the first copy of the report.

In the margin, beside the underline, someone had drawn a hawk.

MAMA I // THE BODY

The examiner does not say mother. The examiner says woman.

The examiner does not say child.

The examiner says fetus.

The examiner does not say birth.

The examiner says delivery.

This is considered precision.

The body is protected from sentiment by vocabulary. It is also protected from certainty.

The uterus does not testify.

The skin does not testify.

The blood does not testify.

The placenta, when present, does not testify.

They provide findings.

Findings are arranged.

Arrangements become conclusions.

Conclusions become records.

Records become history.

History becomes a stranger who arrives in town twenty-seven years later carrying a paper bag.

In a copy of the report kept at the county courthouse, three marginal hands survive:

- The hawk wrote: **OBSERVED.**

- The crow wrote: **NOT EXCLUSIVE.**
- The owl wrote: **INSUFFICIENT.**

No one knew who had written the birds. No one in the courthouse remembered the copy arriving there.

MAMA II // THE TEXTBOOK

The old forensic manual had been printed when the world still believed that the body could be persuaded to confess if examined correctly.

Its pages were brown.

Its diagrams were black.

Its measurements were confident.

Its verbs were excellent:

- *indicates*

- *demonstrates*
- *proves*
- *establishes*

Then, in a different hand:

- *may indicate*
- *may be consistent with*
- *cannot alone establish*

The book had been corrected without being corrected. Its authority remained intact on the page while its certainty became porous in the margins.

A student learned the sign.

The student learned the exception.

The student learned the exception to the exception.

The student eventually learned that an examination was most accurate when it admitted what it could not know.

At page [---]:

AFTER THE LAPSE OF SEVEN TO TEN DAYS THE RECENT DELIVERY OF A WOMAN CANNOT BE CERTAINLY PROVED BY AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIVING WOMAN.

Someone had written beneath it: *Then why seven?*

Someone else: *Why ten?*

A third hand: *Why woman?*

And beneath that: *WHY BODY?*

The manual was last checked out of the regional medical library in [----]. The borrower's name had been written in pencil, erased, and written again with the same pressure.

MAMA III // THE CAST

The Venus was removed.

The Venus was returned.

The Venus disappeared.

The cast remained.

This is not the same as survival.

A cast is not the object.

A cast is not memory.

A cast is the shape left by contact with something that is no longer there.

The plaster knows the absent thing only by pressure.

The museum calls this preservation.

The archive calls it evidence.

The market calls it a replica.

The child called it Mama.

No one knows why, although Thomas Venn, then eight years old, said the word was said calmly and without embarrassment. The boy was standing in the Cyrene Room with one hand flat against the cast's marble-colored shoulder. He had arrived with a woman in a yellow raincoat who signed the visitor book *M. A. Wren*.

The next entry in the book was five years later.

[EXTERNAL INJECTION // MUSEUM LABEL]

- **OBJECT:** FEMALE FIGURE

- **MATERIAL:** PARIAN MARBLE
- **DATE:** SECOND CENTURY B.C. / ATTRIBUTION DISPUTED
- **PROVENANCE:** CYRENE
- **STATUS:** MISSING
- **SURVIVING REPRESENTATION:** PLASTER CAST
- **NOTE:** The original is absent.

ONE SIZE

The first document bearing the name ONE SIZE is not a birth certificate.

It is a school attendance record.

The child enters the record in September. His enrollment form is signed by Marian Wren, address unknown, occupation left blank. In the line marked

emergency contact, she has written only: *Mama.*

There is no kindergarten record.

No preschool record.

No vaccination record in the county archive.

No photograph from infancy.

No baby book.

No baptism.

No newspaper announcement.

There is a photograph of him at approximately eight years old.

There is a photograph of him at approximately twelve.

There is a photograph of him at seventeen.

The photographs resemble one another too closely. The face has not grown correctly. It

appears to have been moved forward through time.

At seventeen he looks like someone remembering being eight.

At eight he looks like someone waiting to become seventeen.

- **The principal wrote:** *Quiet child. Difficult to place.*

- **The school nurse wrote:** *No immediate concerns. Refuses a temperature check but knows where the thermometer is kept.*

- **The librarian wrote:** *Already knows the Dewey numbers. Returns books dry after walking home in rain.*

- **The janitor wrote:** *Keeps a blue marble in his left pocket. Polishes it on the*

hem of his shirt when worried.

The final note was not crossed out. It had been added below the others, in a hand no one could identify:

Family present.

No family name follows.

THE STRANGER

Years later a stranger arrives.

He does not arrive dramatically.

He gets off a bus.

He buys coffee.

He asks where the library is.

He has the wrong accent for the town but the right shoes. He knows which diner used to be a bank. He knows the old location

of the post office. He knows that the house at the eastern end of Alder Street burned before he was born.

Thomas Venn is working the library desk. He is retired from the museum but has kept the Thursday shift because the town is smaller when it rains, and there are fewer ways for its past to get in.

The stranger asks for the county school records.

Thomas says they are not public without a name.

The stranger says: *One Size.*

Thomas looks up.

The stranger's left hand is closed around something. Not tightly. Not protectively. As if he is holding a fact that might roll away.

When asked how he knows the town, he says: *My mother told me.*

This is the first time Thomas hears him use the word: *Mother.*

THREE MAMAS

There are three women in the file.

The first is dead.

She is the woman on the trail: unidentified, age estimated between twenty-six and thirty-six, a narrow scar under the chin, evidence consistent with a recent delivery. Her blouse is missing one pearl button. Her shoes contain Maine soil and a crescent of white plaster.

The second is documented.

She is Marian Wren, who enrolled a boy in school and borrowed

books under three library cards. In the card photograph she wears a yellow raincoat. Her library accession number was not issued until after the date on the photograph. In every borrowing record, she checks out books on anatomy, art restoration, and weather.

The third is remembered.

She is M. A. Wren, who visited the Cyrene Room with a child holding a blue marble. Thomas remembers her because she bent to the boy and said, *Do not call it that where people can hear you.* He remembers the child replying, *But it is Mama.* He remembers this happening in [----].

Marian Wren would have been four years old in [----].

One woman is photographed beside a car manufactured twelve years after the photograph was supposedly taken.

One woman appears on a library card whose accession number was not issued until after her death.

One woman is remembered by a man who was four years old when she supposedly disappeared.

All three women have the same handwriting.

This is not presented as evidence.

It is presented as a problem.

The boy's enrollment form and the trail report were compared twenty-seven years after the woman was found.

The same hand had written *recent delivery* and *Mama*.

THE CROW'S OBJECTION

The crow refuses the genealogy.

The crow is not interested in mothers.

The crow is interested in objects:

- A pearl button.
- A shoe.
- A receipt.
- A photograph.
- A piece of blue glass.
- A child’s marble.
- A plaster fragment.

The pearl button was found under a root near the body. The plaster fragment was caught in the seam of the dead woman’s shoe. The blue marble was not logged at the scene, although a later property clerk swore there had been one in the evidence tray.

- **The crow says:** *[---]*
- **The hawk says:** *[---]*
- **The owl says:** *[---]*

Thomas reads this sequence in the courthouse copy and thinks, for the first time, not of the woman but of the boy in the museum. The small hand on the cast's shoulder. The raincoat. The word said too easily.

THE HAWK'S REPORT

At [--:--] in the afternoon the woman entered the trail.

At [--:--] the rain began.

At [--:--]-

There is no transition.

She is standing in a kitchen.

Things don’t remember.

Things remain.

Things remain incorrectly.

The kitchen belongs to someone else, though later Thomas will recognize the crooked cupboard door from his grandmother’s house. There is a boy under the table. His knees are scraped. He is not One Size.

He is One Size.

He is eight.

He is forty-three.

He is holding a marble in his left hand, working it against the cuff of his shirt until it shines. The marble is warm.

The woman kneels. Her hair is wet from rain. Her blouse is missing a button.

She says: *When they ask where you came from, tell them the school.*

The boy says: *That isn't where I came from.*

I know, she says.

The woman looks toward the window. Beyond it, rain has erased the yard.

Then, after a while: *Don't tell them where you came from.*

She means the town.

She means the body.

She means the future.

She means the space between one record and the next.

The hawk's report ends there.

THE INCIDENT

The woman falls.

No struggle.

No cry.

No witness.

The trail continues.

A dog passes with its owner. The dog stops. The dog smells the air. The owner calls it twice. The dog leaves.

Three hours later a man finds her. He calls the police. The police call the medical examiner. The medical examiner calls the body what the body has already become: **Evidence.**

A patrol officer collects the contents of her pockets: a library receipt made illegible by rain, a strip of paper with a Dewey decimal number, and a key without an address.

The receipt is later restored. The title borrowed is not recorded.

On the back, in ink run partly to blue water, are five words:

THOMAS WILL KNOW THE CAST.

Thomas does not learn this until the stranger brings him the old manual.

FORENSIC QUALIFICATION

The historical literature describes signs associated with recent delivery.

Some are transient.

Some persist.

Some overlap with conditions unrelated to childbirth.

Some may be absent.

Some may be altered by time, decomposition, previous pregnancies, individual anatomy, disease, or circumstance.

No isolated finding supplies the missing narrative.

The woman on the trail was therefore never proved to be One Size's mother.

Nor was she proved not to be.

This is not a weakness of forensic science.

It is one of its ethical achievements.

The body is allowed not to answer.

THE BODY DOES NOT OWE US A STORY.

The owl underlined this sentence in blue pencil, once, without comment.

PALAVERING ENGINE // MAMA

The body was there and the record was made and the record was copied and the copy was filed and the file was misplaced and the file was found and the woman acquired a name and the name acquired a mother and the mother acquired a date and the date acquired a discrepancy and the discrepancy acquired an investigator and the investigator acquired a notebook and the notebook acquired a coffee stain and the coffee stain acquired a shape like Maine and Maine acquired a trail and the trail acquired a woman and the woman acquired a child and the child acquired a school record and the school record acquired a name and the name was One Size, except that One Size was not the name at birth because there was no birth record and there was no birth record because there was no beginning anyone could prove and there was no beginning anyone

could prove because the first thing anyone found was not a child but a body and the body was there—

STATIC

—mother

—mater

—mutter

—Mutter

—mère

—мать

—äiti

—Mama

The word survives translation by becoming less precise.

That is its advantage.

That is its failure.

THE ARCHIVE OF THE ABSENT ORIGINAL

- **FILE A:** Woman found dead on Maine trail.
- **FILE B:** Forensic examination.
- **FILE C:** Historical forensic manual.
- **FILE D:** Photograph of unidentified woman.
- **FILE E:** Photograph of One Size.
- **FILE F:** School record.
- **FILE G:** Library receipt, recovered incomplete.
- **FILE H:** Plaster cast.
- **FILE I:** No original located.
- **FILE J:** Mother’s name.

- **FILE K:** Mother’s name corrected.
- **FILE L:** Mother’s name crossed out.
- **FILE M:** One Size’s handwriting.
- **FILE N:** Same handwriting, earlier date.
- **FILE O:** Date impossible.
- **FILE P:** Impossible dates retained for archival purposes.

THE STRANGER'S QUESTION

He comes to the library again.

Thomas is working the desk.

One Size places the paper bag on the counter.

Inside it is a book.

The old forensic manual.

Thomas opens it.

Page [---].

Page [---].

The margins are crowded.

Hawk.

Crow.

Owl.

The blue marble falls from One Size's coat pocket and rolls beneath the desk. Thomas sees it before One Size does. In the dim light it is the exact blue of the glass fragment described in the property clerk's statement.

Thomas asks: *Where did you get this?*

One Size says: *My mother had it.*

Thomas turns another page. Beneath the old printed

certainty, in a hand he knows from school forms and museum logs and the trail report, someone has written:

THE CAST REMEMBERS PRESSURE. NOT NAMES.

Thomas asks: *Which mother?*

One Size looks at him.

For the first time in the narrative he appears frightened.

Not because he does not know.

Because he knows there are three correct answers.

Then he says: *I came back because she thought you would understand the difference.*

Between what? Thomas asks.

Between a copy and a lie.

One Size looks down at the manual, at the blue marble in Thomas's palm, at the rain whitening the library windows.

MAMA IV // THE ABSENT ORIGINAL

There was a woman.

There was a body.

There was a possible delivery.

There was a child.

There was a record.

There was a missing interval.

There was a stranger.

There was a cast.

There was a town.

There were three birds.

There was a book that tried to teach certainty.

There were three mothers: the dead woman, the woman who made records, and the woman Thomas remembered before she could have lived.

None of them could be excluded.

None of them could be restored.

The original was absent.

The pressure remained.

NON-HUMAN ANCHOR

The owl does not care whether One Size was born.

The owl does not care whether the woman on the trail was his mother.

The owl does not care whether the trail is the beginning of the story.

The owl knows only that the trail existed before the woman.

The body existed before the report.

The report existed before the rumor.

The rumor existed before the stranger.

The stranger exists now.

The trail does not distinguish among these things.

Rain falls on the place where the woman was found.

Rain falls on the place where One Size stood.

Rain falls on the library roof.

Rain falls on the plaster cast.

Rain falls on the page.

The owl turns its head.

The owl sees no chronology.

Only ground.

Only weather.

Only the persistent fact that something was once there.

And something else is there now.

The crow takes the marble.

The hawk rises.

One Size remains.

Melancholy Flower Children

By Zelda Onn

In the long arcade the shadows fell according to race, milieu, moment: the climate of the bureaucratic evening, the bloodline of institutional memory, the economic fact of a door that cost more open than closed. Taine insisted. The equation cut into the wood was not a metaphor; it was the iron law of the place—

At the center of that law stood the cauliflower, held upright against the chest. Its three bruises were small, exact, and darkening: three places where the red Fox had pressed its paw and left an argument in the flesh. Climate. Inheritance. Archive. The vegetable had absorbed the proof because

nothing else in the arcade could be trusted to keep it.

The door stood beyond it, expensive in either direction. To open it was an expenditure; to close it, another. Its hinges remembered every clerk who had touched them. The long colonnade remembered the rest.

But the arcade itself refused the naming. Mallarmé subtracted. The colonnades lengthened into white intervals that devoured the plaza. No sun. No east. Only the absence where a sun had once lived eleven years inside a ledger and then un-happened. The door was neither open nor closed; the words that had claimed those states thinned, then dissolved into the blank that outlasted them.

The cauliflower became less a vegetable than the vacancy shaped like one. Its three

bruises opened into pale holes. The Fox became the space the umbrella failed to occupy. The chest behind the cauliflower withdrew. Even the equation lost its terms, leaving only the chalky shine of erasure on the wood and a pressure where James had been.

Then Werfel entered by pressure rather than by name. The west reported clear. The south raised its hands in the old civic gesture. An upright bus stood among the columns like a stele that had forgotten its dead. The ballot box breathed once, audibly. A cloud entered through the sentence.

Every passenger in the bus wore a different face of James, and every face looked toward the door. They did not ask whether it was open. They did not ask whether it was closed. They looked at the cauliflower held

against the stranger’s chest and saw, in its three bruises, three small claims that had not been forgiven.

“Say what happened,” said the voice that had waited for this.

The Fox pressed its paw.

“Say whom it happened to.”

CLOUD + BALLOT + FOX = JAMES

JAMES ≠ PERSON James was not a person. James was every passenger who had learned to wear a face for the crossing.

“Say what remains.”

The bruises remained. The door remained. The arms around the cauliflower tightened, not to protect it from the plaza, but to prevent the plaza from taking the last visible thing and making it another white interval. The machinery of alternation began to smell of

its own procedure. Explain, withhold, explain, withhold—the dance had become visible as dance.

And the fourth voice tore through:

The rage burned out.

Cauliflower.

Three bruises.

Held upright against the chest in the empty plaza while the long shadows of the colonnades continued their slow, unanswerable geometry. The Fox was gone. James was gone. The bus, the ballot, the cloud had gone back into whatever sentence had admitted them.

Only the door remained, from both sides at once. It spoke the final notice without further commentary.

The bruises deepened.

Cheese and crackers, the three
of them yammering in one skull:
Taine with his taxonomic
fixation for climate and blood
and the iron laws; Mallarmé, the
white-space vampire, sucking the
nouns dry until even the
cauliflower is only the gap
where a vegetable once pretended
to be a head; Werfel waiting
with the wet handkerchief of
sincerity, ready to sob the
plain name once the cleverness
has exhausted itself; and me,
the fury-spark, the pun-drunk
howl at the whole fraudulent
chassis that dared wire these
mutually despising ghosts into
one continuous sentence as if
literature were a municipal
committee meeting, as if the
reader's patience were an
infinite ledger, as if the
writer's hubris were not already
stinking up the arcade like a
Fox dead three days and still
clutching an umbrella—pan-sear

the protocols, pan-sear the scheduling of conflict, pan-sear the elegant friction, the shape is a lie and the wiring is a crime and still the bruises deepen—

STĚNY MAJÍ UŠI

A Laughing Bear Dossier, Filed Complete

— attributed to Bevo the Longhorn, traditional German

SUITABLE: repairing what carries current. AVOID: trusting a border you cannot see.

I. The Repair

He paid two dollars for it. TECHNO-BEAT, ELECTRONIC KEYBOARD, red plastic, yellow buttons, a RECORD light that still blinks and a REPLAY light that still means it. One of the three AA contacts had lost its spring — some earlier owner's carelessness, or the manufacturer's, filed now under nobody's name — and so it sat dead until a ballpoint pen gave

up its spine for the cause. A dead pen sacrificed its backbone so a two-dollar bear could speak again. This is not a metaphor. It is simply what happened, on a counter, with a knife and some patience.

Before the fix, before the bear had a name that stuck, there was a name that didn't: Subpar. A Wabanaki voice said it first, plainly, the way a nickname arrives before anyone's asked permission to give one. The correction came later and worse — not from a court, not from an elder, not from anyone with standing to grant it, but from a printer, jamming on a laminated card, three other voices trying to speak through the same failing machine at once: a courtroom, a river, a woman dead for centuries. It caught on LAUGHING instead of SUBPAR and nobody in the room argued,

because arguing with a printer is beneath even puppets. That is how the name arrived. No clean authority. No one to thank or blame. Just a jam, and then a bear who kept it.

II. An Almanac for the Night

SUITABLE: cataloguing the periphery. AVOID: mistaking the center for the whole.

Three witnesses file this section jointly and agree on nothing except the date.

The **Latvians** arrive first, though no one invited them, having burned through their words centuries ago and kept only the necessary ones. Seven hundred years under Germanic landlords left them punctuality and an unwillingness to waste a syllable — or so the margin

claims, though one Latvian immediately objects to the margin, another rearranges the chairs, and a third begins taking minutes before the meeting has begun. They insist the keyboard becomes a conference table: every rhythm button a delegate — RUMBA, SWING, DISCO — seated together because, as one voice in an old margin put it, the room was no longer looking down but up, and even looking around.

Then one of them presses DISCO.

Nobody can explain why.

The **Czechs** arrive on schedule, which the record shows is not incidental. In 1945 an army stood forty miles from a capital it could easily have taken, and chose — by agreement, on paper, along a line that existed nowhere except in the minds of the men who'd signed it — to

wait, while the city inside that line fought alone for four days before help came. A delivery robot halting nightly at the exact tolerance of its own jurisdiction is doing something recognizably the same shape.

The margin calls the Czechs "Germans amid delightful Slavs."

A Czech crosses this out.

Another Czech restores it.

A third writes underneath:

This is not how any of this works.

Tonight's keyboard — punctual presets, Slavic yellow buttons, quietly civilized chaos underneath — earns the description honestly only until the SWING button is pressed seventeen seconds early. The Czechs blame the clock. The clock declines to testify.

The **Slovaks** refuse the table and start singing instead. An old proverb gets inverted for the occasion: where there is a Hungarian, there is anger; where there is a bear, there is a song. Laughing Bear takes this as instruction. He doesn't organize like the Latvians or wait like the Czechs. He just starts, loudly, before the rules are finished being explained.

Then a Slovak produces a ledger.

Nobody knows where it came from.

The singing continues.

And underneath all three: the old joke about Bohemia, that its people look German and live "quietly civilized," conventional, correct — Bohemians who aren't bohemian at all. The word travelled west, got romantic, got left behind by its own owners. A street that never asked for that name — this

street, the Tree Streets, mycorrhizal, fruiting bears and shopping carts instead of mushrooms — has the better claim to it now.

Nobody here is punctual.

Nobody here is quietly anything.

The almanac records this as an exception.

The exception is filed under *usual practice*.

III. The Laundered Voice

SUITABLE: current restored by improvised means. AVOID: forgetting where the current came from.

Some of the night's language didn't survive the trip home clean. Run English through Bulgarian, then German, then

back — *spine* returns as **backbone**; *agrees* returns as **consents**; *disagreement, footnoted* returns as **quarrel, furnished**; *anger* returns as **wrath**; *never asked for* returns as **never demanded**.

None of these are mistranslations exactly.

They're upgrades nobody authorized, words that came back wearing someone else's coat because it fit better than the original.

One word comes back wearing a hat.

Nobody knows which country supplied it.

Say the quarrel was furnished with a footnote and the footnote was furnished with a translator and the translator was furnished with a country that does not care what it's carrying, say

wrath sat down where anger used to sit and nobody noticed the chair had changed, say a street demanded a name it never asked for the way the almanac's suitable-column demands you repair what carries current, and say it without stopping, because stopping is where the law would finally get its consent, and this dossier was built specifically to withhold that.

Here the robot simply stops mid-slope-measurement, and is switched off by nothing — no hand, no order, no fault code filed in any department.

The narrative does not explain this.

Cause and effect, as scheduled, fail to report for duty.

A translator is sent to find them.

The translator returns with a receipt.

IV. The Elevated Gate

Two companies. One shared clock. Neither knows the other is running.

Stage Left runs clean: Laughing Bear takes the stage at the agreed hour, the robot testifies to its slope reading and is dismissed, the lanterns disagree and are told to take it elsewhere, the concert happens, closes, is filed by morning.

Stage Right is credited to Cricot 2, under Kantor's *Theatre of Death* — live actors and mannequins on equal footing, the way a classroom desk in Kraków in 1975 was never merely a prop. Here Laughing Bear shares the stage with his own earlier

selves — the two-dollar version, the Subpar version, the printer-jammed version — none of them the real one, all of them equally furniture, equally alive.

The concert never closes.

It is still, technically, happening.

A Latvian is taking minutes.

A Czech is waiting for the proper signal.

A Slovak is singing from somewhere behind the scenery.

The bear does not acknowledge any of them.

The robot does not know it has been cast. It only knows its own log, and under the house rules that log is not permitted to be more than what it is:

RUNNING SLOPE: 4.8% (within tolerance)

CROSS SLOPE: 2.3% (flag — resurvey recommended)

DETECTABLE WARNING SURFACE: degraded, ~40% dome integrity

AUDIO EVENT LOGGED: unclassified — tonal pattern, vocalization, low-frequency rattle, struck ceramic

ACTION: none required. continuing survey.

That's the whole of its testimony, and it sits on the same bench as Kantor's dead schoolchildren without either one explaining the other.

The robot is not a metaphor tonight.

It is also not not one.

Keeping it happy means leaving that contradiction alone — undisturbed in its actual job, un-annexed by anyone's symbolism, permitted to keep

measuring while the Theatre of Death happens two feet to its left.

The reporter sits where he has always sat for this: not centered, hearing both stages at once, forbidden from converting either into the true account.

He does not descend.

He does not adjudicate.

This has always been the job.

Coda

The camera keeps rolling for Vimeo. A separate recorder, not the camera's own compressed ear, keeps the audio that will become the vinyl side. Both will disagree about what happened, the way the oil lamp and the LED have disagreed for two centuries, unresolved,

footnoted, still on the shelf together.

The camera sees the bear.

The recorder hears the room.

Neither is asked to reconcile the difference.

Somewhere behind all of it the gunungan lifts — the puppet-shape that means *interval, not ending* — and nobody in this dossier is authorized to say whether that means the show is over.

The report is marked:

FILED COMPLETE.

The file remains open.

Da.

LAUGHING BEAR

LAUGHING BEAR SINGS THE LAUGHING BEAR SONGBOOK — out now on vinyl & CD.

He was Subpar first. Then a jammed printer somewhere in the back offices coughed up a new name, laminated and still warm, and the neighborhood decided it was official. This is that bear singing himself into being a second time — live, into a karaoke machine, backed by a two-dollar toy keyboard that was missing a battery spring until one got pulled from a pen.

Made to order, ships worldwide, priced for wherever you are:
🎵 Vinyl & CD: https://elasticstage.com/laughingbear/releases/laughing-bear-sings-the-laughing-bear-songbook-singleep

Released alongside the video piece "Poetronica Scroll" and WANDERAKTE issue two — all landing together.
https://youtu.be/1WJqSRGeG1Q?is=4yg0Lug2mJESHPOq

CITATIONS

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THE PANOPTICON INSTITUTE OF RECURSIVE INQUIRY

A Manifesto, and the Only Diploma You Will Ever Need

I. FOUNDING PRINCIPLE

The Panopticon Institute of Recursive Inquiry was not founded. It was noticed.

It was noticed, as it happens, somewhere between mile markers — on which highway remains disputed, the map in question being of Guam.

It has been operating, uncredentialed and unzoned, for as long as there have been people awake at 2 a.m. with a phone in one hand and a question they refused to let go of.

The Institute has no campus, because the campus was never the point. The campus was the collateral — the thing you mortgaged your twenties to in exchange for a library card and a building with your professor's

office in it. The Institute has dispensed with the collateral. It has kept the library.

The Institute's central claim, filed here as founding doctrine, is this: Anyone holding a thirty-dollar phone and a will to keep asking the next question already has provisional access to more primary sources, more recorded lectures, and more digitized special collections than any single physical university could have offered a hundred years of tuition-paying students.

The bottleneck was never access.

It was believing you needed permission.

The Institute grants no permission. It only grants the diploma.

II. WHAT THE INSTITUTE IS NOT

The Institute is not opposed to universities, professors,

libraries, or brick and mortar. Many of the free materials referenced below exist because real universities — MIT, Yale, Stanford, and the great public libraries whose collections feed the Internet Archive's lending shelves — decided to open their doors on their own initiative.

The Institute is opposed to stagnation dressed as prestige. To the notion that knowledge becomes real only after someone in an office signs for it.

To waiting.

III. THE DIPLOMA

Detach along the perforation. Frame it, tape it above your desk, fold it into your wallet. It requires no notarization and answers to no registrar.

THE PANOPTICON INSTITUTE OF RECURSIVE INQUIRY

est. whenever you started looking things up out of real hunger and not because it was assigned

Let it be known that

(name, or the name you go by, or no name at all)

is hereby recognized as a

DOCTOR OF RECURSIVE INQUIRY

having satisfied the Institute's sole requirement: the refusal to stop asking the next question once the first one had been answered.

This diploma carries no accreditation, because accreditation was always a claim made by an institution about itself, and this Institute has nothing to protect.

This diploma expires never, and is revoked only by the graduate's own decision to stop looking things up.

Countersigned by no one. Filed nowhere. Valid everywhere a phone gets signal.

IV. THE LIBRARY

Reading list. Not a curriculum. There is no curriculum.

Full Texts

- Internet Archive — millions of digitized books, a lending library built from public and university collections, plus Internet Archive Scholar.
- Project Gutenberg — tens of thousands of public-domain books in multiple formats.
- HathiTrust Digital Library — a shared digital library built by research universities.
- Wikisource and Wikibooks — primary texts and open textbooks.

- Perseus Digital Library – Greek and Latin texts with integrated dictionaries.
- Standard Ebooks – beautifully typeset editions of public-domain works.

Recorded Lectures

- MIT OpenCourseWare – complete course materials from MIT.
- Open Yale Courses – full recorded semester-length courses.
- Khan Academy – structured instruction from arithmetic through college-level mathematics and science.
- University lecture channels on YouTube – uneven, but often excellent.

Papers and Journals

- arXiv — preprints in mathematics, physics, computer science, and related fields.
- DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) — peer-reviewed journals that are free by design.

- Google Scholar — a search layer connecting much of the scholarly literature.

Reference

- Wikipedia — not the destination; the doorway.

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy — peer-reviewed and continuously updated.

- Smithsonian Open Access — millions of openly licensed images and collection records.

Audio

- LibriVox — volunteer-read public-domain audiobooks.
- Libby / OverDrive — digital borrowing through participating public libraries.

V. CLOSING PRINCIPLE

The Institute does not ask you to trust it. It asks only that, before tonight's impulse passes, you open one of the libraries above and begin.

Keep the diploma somewhere you'll actually see it — not as proof that you finished anything, but as a standing permission slip you wrote for yourself. For a school that was never going to check attendance.

—Filed for the back pages of WANDERAKTE (formerly Fowl Feathered Review), aboard Larry, care of The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition.

PUBLICATION LINEAGE & EARLIER PUBLICATIONS

WANDERAKTE traces its lineage to a **Honeywell/WEIN computer system** in tandem with a rented Xerox machine, circa 1979.

The Almanac was succeeded by Fowl Feathered Review, published under the Fowlpox Press imprint. The first 34 issues of Fowl Feathered Review, along with the poetry collections and chapbooks listed below, remain archived at https://fowlpoxpress.yolasite.com/. Hundreds of further issues followed under the same title.

Fowlpox Press has since been succeeded in all operational, financial, and vehicular respects by The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition — not to be confused with the Spring-Wound Mammoth Waffle Coalition, its now-defunct sister company — under whose stewardship the magazine now publishes as WANDERAKTE.

Chapbooks and collections published under the Fowlpox Press / Fowl Feathered Review era:

1. [Theoretical] Chaos by A.J. Huffman
2. A Mermaid Crashing into Dawn by Linda M. Crate
3. A Rag-Torn World by Dawnell Harrison
4. A Sleep/less Night: A-Z Poems by Kristopher D. Taylor
5. Aging Within These Syllables by Felino A. Soriano
6. All Right Already by Bruce McRae
7. Between These Rhythms: Bone & Ash by Felino A. Soriano
8. Burning Los Angeles by Robin Wyatt Dunn

9. Bye, Donna Summer! – haiku by Ali Znaidi

10. Candid by Gregory Liffick

11. Chalk Lines by Brian Michael Barbeito

12. Chemotherapy for the Soul by Leilanie Stewart

13. Clockwise Cats by Alison Ross

14. Conversations with the Muse by Neil Ellman

15. Dancing with Hedgehogs by K.J. Hannah Greenberg

16. Desecrations by Howie Good

17. Double-Takes by Neil Ellman

18. Eco Echoes, First Selection by Duane Locke

19. Electronic Loss and Other Poems by Gary Beck

20. Espials by Felino A. Soriano

21. Experimental Ruminations by Ali Znaidi

22. Family Matters by Steve DeFrance

23. Fishing in the Knife Drawer by Mark J. Mitchell

24. Fluid & Crystallized by KJ Hannah Greenberg

25. Forms, Migrating by Felino A. Soriano

26. Grimaldi by Christopher Mulrooney

27. Harbor of Grace by Jnana Hodson

28. How Much of by Heller Levinson

29. In the Parallel of Pursued Occurrences by Felino A. Soriano

30. Internet Yearnings and Other Poems by Gary Beck

31. Mindscaping by Changming Yuan

32. Miró's Poesie: Ekphrastic Poems by Alison Ross

33. Nation of Nate: A Dongpo Pork Mixtape of Melancholy & Madness – Nathaniel S. Rounds, ed. Alison Ross

34. Nature Poems by Danny P. Barbare

35. Of Isolated Limning by Felino A. Soriano

36. Of Thunder, Pearls and Birdsong by Steve Denehan

37. Ostrakon Epistles: Selected Works of Nathaniel S. Rounds (ed. Ilan Blaine)

38. Pathos | Particular Invocation by Felino A. Soriano
39. Poetry: No Poetic License Needed! by Haniyeh Yaseri

40. rhythm:s by Felino A. Soriano

41. Somehow Poems by Gregory Liffick

42. Tale of Twin Cities by Michael K. Gause and Alex Stolis

43. Terrestrial Illuminations by Duane Locke

44. The Barber's Boy by Phil Boiarski

45. The Daisy Roots Under My Pillow by Holly Day

46. The Foreigner of Two Fabrics by Stanford Cheung

47. The Heart Broken Open by Ronald Pies

48. The Ignited Soul by Dawnell Harrison
49. The Love Death and Other Poems by Dawnell Harrison

50. The Maiden Sky: New and Selected Poems by Dawnell Harrison

51. The Moon and Her Ocean by Austin Davis

52. The Red Forest by Dmitry Blizniuk

53. Vocal Apparitions: New & Selected Poems 2012–2016 by Felino A. Soriano

54. Waving at Strangers by Ken W. Simpson

55. When the Moon Is New by Joan McNerney

56. whoosh by Heller Levinson

57. Word Mosaics by Karen Robiscoe

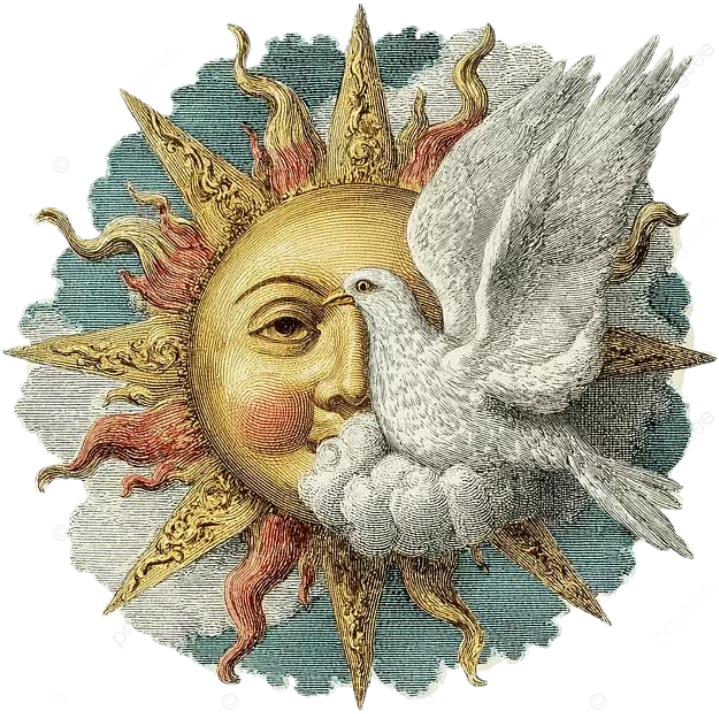
58. Wordscaping by Changming Yuan

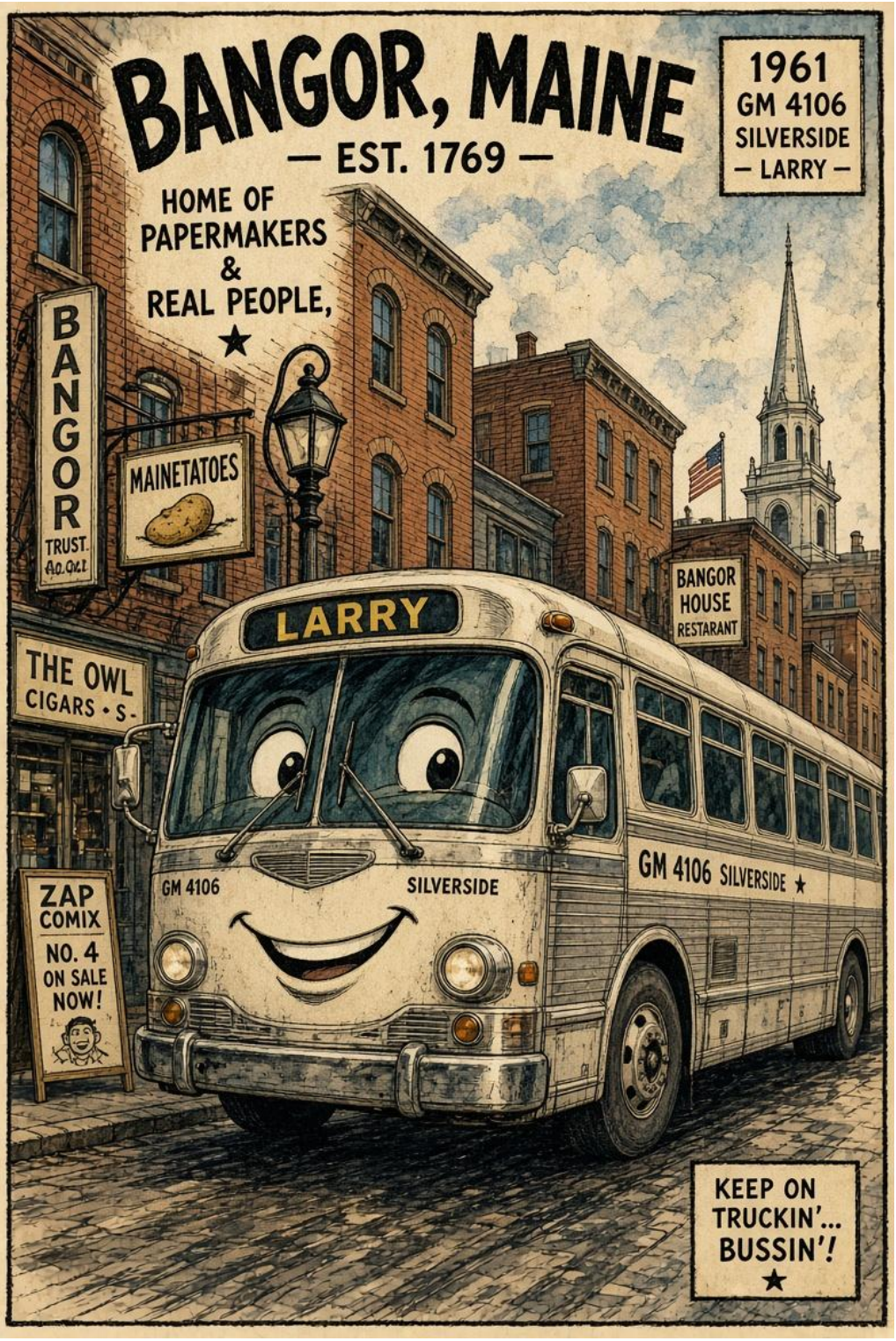
More recent issues of WANDERAKTE are available FREE by email subscription, or in POD, eBook, or archived format, care of The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition. Contact [new Coalition contact address – placeholder, swap for the real one] for details.

There are no copies extent or otherwise of Doctor Zhai's remaining. If you find a copy, drop us a line.

Circa 1979, there was a Xeroxed collection of images and visual forays into data, made alongside experimentation with a Honeywell/WEIN computer system. This project was called **VERSUCHSANORDNUNG** I. The computer work and the Xerox work were not directly connected: the photocopies were not printouts from the computer, nor was the Xerox machine functioning as an output device for the Honeywell system.

Do not contact the Waffle Coalition. They will not answer, and if they do, it isn't them.

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